

Strook out of rhyme, so naturally as this;
 Our monosyllables so kindly fall
 And meet, opposed in rhyme, as they did
 kiss.

Equally vain have been attempts from the
 opposite quarter to do away with our polysyllabic
 Latinisms. Our wealth lies in possessing both.

It is here in poetry, then, and in prose-
 poetry like Sir Thomas Browne's, that we need fear no
 comparisons with France. No doubt the strictures of English
 critics on the 'monotony' of French metre, particularly
 the Alexandrine, are mere insular ignorance. But the
 very clarity of a language may in some ways hamper its
 poets, as an atmosphere with no sultry gleam of great
 thunderclouds, no sombre trailing mists upon its
 mountains, may impoverish a landscape. And again, the tense
 intellectual alertness which is partly cause, partly effect,
 of that clarity may lend itself less kindly to the literature of
 dream. The imagination may feel caged in a salon, with
 its quick sense of the reasonable and of the
 ridiculous; the poet finds it harder to forget his audience, and
 therefore tends to play for it and upon it, instead of looking
 in his heart and writing for himself. The result is liable
 to be not so much poetry as rhetoric, though the
 rhetoric may be magnificent. 'Assurément', says Anatole
 France, 'nous aimons la poésie ... mais nous l'aimons a
 notre maniére; nous tenons & ce qu'elle soit éloquente, et
 nous la dispensons volontiers d'être poétique. Dans tous
 les genres il

nous faut des Marseillaises.' It would be
easy and absurd
to exaggerate this side of a literature which
has yet pro-
duced Ronsard, Racine, and Baudelaire.
But it remains
not unnatural that this very reasonableness
and analytical
power which makes French novelists so
masterly in cri-
ticising the passions should make French
poets sometimes
less spontaneous in feeling and uttering
them. Despite